

**Submission
No 3**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Inner West Council

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Inner West Council Submission: Parliamentary Inquiry from the Legislative Council
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
The Music and Arts Economy in New South Wales

Inner West Council supports the Inquiry into the Music and Arts Economy in New South Wales.

The Value of the Inner West's music and arts scene

Inner West Council recognises music and art are integral to our area's social and economic advantage and liveability. Arts and culture is a key priority for the local community, embedded in Council's strategic plans (*Inner West Community Vision Statement 2016; Cultural Action Plan 2016 – 2020*). The diversity and grassroots nature of the area's cultural offering is also a key factor in local identity, driving cultural tourism and audiences for the arts. Key statistics on the value of local music and arts include:

- The Inner West Council area has the highest concentration for people working in the creative and cultural industries in NSW (9.4%, 2011 Census)
- Output/Total Sales (\$m) of the Cultural Industries in the Inner West is over \$1 billion, (\$1.164 billion). This equates to 8.0% of output/ total sales, as compared to 5.2% in Greater Sydney (Profile ID, 2015)
- Inner West Council area has clear creative industries specialisations in a number of areas including the visual arts and music (2011 Census)
- Inner West Council supports music and the arts through its investment in grants, residencies, and specialist expertise to support and enhance arts and cultural life to enliven and activate the Inner West.

Key Strengths

Visitors, residents and businesses are drawn to the Inner West's cultural vibrancy. It has an atmosphere of authentic street culture, where new ideas are born, and arts audiences can discover new works and celebrate memorable cultural experiences. This culture and identity are underpinned by a history of creativity and tolerance, a sense of artistic freedom and a high number of active creative producers (often working in industrial areas and cultural manufacturing precincts) who make, create, collaborate and contribute to cultural life in the area.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the inner west's position at the heart of Sydney's live music and cultural scene:

- Close proximity to the CBD with good public transport
- Historical legacy: in the 1980s and 1990s,
 - o cheap terraces close to the city made Balmain, Annandale and Newtown a magnet for artists, which has since spread to industrial areas, such as east Marrickville and Sydenham
 - o iconic inner west pubs such as the Bridge and the Bald Faced Stag leading the live music scene
- The existence of diverse, affordable cultural spaces, enabled in large part by the retention of important inner city ring industrial lands
- Vibrant mainstreets, such as King St and Enmore Rd, drawing people to local arts, culture and food offerings
- Long standing music and entertainment venues, such as the Enmore Theatre and Factory Theatre, and the establishment of the Italian Forum Cultural Centre as a multiuse venue.

- Community arts spaces such as the Addison Road Centre, Australia's largest community centre, that feed local hybrid arts and social justice activism
- A high proportion of artists live and have bought homes in the inner west, resulting in a community that values and patronises the arts
- Council policies and programs that:
 - nurture community spirit and a tolerance of a wide range of people
 - encourage exploration, edginess and recognize the inner west as the home of independent arts
 - allow community activation of public spaces through street art, busking and other temporary arts activities with minimal interference from Council

Some recent Inner West initiatives

Inner West Council has sought to support local music venues and the local creative economy through initiatives including:

- The Off Broadway initiative (2015) driven by former Leichhardt Council which encouraged creative use of empty shop fronts on Parramatta Rd and surrounds through marketing, local planning support and brokering with land owners and artists
- The Live Music Marrickville Action Plan (2015) developed by former Marrickville Council, which included: a \$50,000 grants program (for audience development, all ages gigs and noise abatement); identifying an arts planning representative; and, the Sydenham Creative Hub initiative

Council also expresses its in principle commitment to the transformation of the industrial area between Sydenham Station and Victoria Road in Marrickville into a vibrant live music and arts precinct, and further notes the threat to live music and the creative arts in Victoria Road to Sydenham Station area posed by Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor.

Council supports through its own venues and grants programs diverse music and arts programs across the spectrum that contribute to a diverse cultural experience in Inner Sydney, including orchestras, bands and performance ensembles that activate heritage Town Halls and the Public Domain, increase footfall to the high streets and local restaurants and bars, and enliven local arts and cultural life

- Annual music and performance festivals such as Site and Sound, featuring leading Inner West artists, Jazz in the Park, and Symphony Under the Stars
- Resident music groups at Council Town Halls - The Metropolitan Orchestra, Leichhardt Celebrity Brass Band

Inner West Council is actively involved in cross-Council meetings and collaboration with the Live Music Taskforce/ City of Sydney and Parramatta Council. Council is currently exploring how to bring arts and live music to the shop fronts, former factories, cafes and office blocks of the Inner West including options on reforms that will allow non-residential buildings to be used as a small scale arts and live music spaces, without the need for a development application to be submitted.

Major Challenges and Threats

- Rezoning of industrial lands, resulting in a loss of cultural spaces that house local artists, makers, recording studios and venues (ie. Carrington Road, Victoria Road and Lords Road precincts) that make a significant contribution to the creative economy of Central Sydney.
- Increased residential development in close proximity to cultural activity, particularly industrial lands
- Changing expectations of residents through the process of gentrification
- Cultural organisations being priced out of the area due to a loss of suitable spaces/ rezoning and gentrification
- Noise attenuation issues: in the case of music venues and other noise generating arts activities, new residential developments threaten creatives' ability to generate noise
- A challenging regulatory environment including variety of legislation and governing bodies (for venues: liquor licensing, POEO Act, Council DAs, National Construction Code etc)
- Artists are unable to afford to live in the area (housing and other living costs)
- Costs of moving/ relocating creative studios/ venues with changes in ownership or rezoning can sink creative enterprises
- Cultural producers maintain that audiences and clientele cannot be sustained if they are forced further afield due to development, rezoning, price increases etc (they need to stay in the Inner City ring)
- Access to quality rehearsal space.

Inner West Key Priorities

1. Supporting cultural production through the protection of industrial lands

To support our global city, different levels of creative and cultural products and experiences are needed to create a thriving nightlife and creative economy, from participation in the arts, to supporting emerging practitioners, to well established products appearing on the national and global stage.

The Inner West provides a critical and distinctive piece of Greater Sydney's cultural infrastructure. It is the home of unique cultural products and services that supply flagship Greater Sydney events and cultural institutions, plus an incubator and feeder of new and innovative works. The qualities of these distinctive services and resources include:

- The last significant remaining hubs of Inner City ring cultural production, vital for Greater Sydney at large. Research indicates (Gibson et al, 2017, *Made in Marrickville*) that key events and producers require services in the Inner City Ring and it is not viable to move these further afield
- Home to displaced creative manufacturing from Alexandria, St Peters and other local areas subject to rezoning and gentrification
- The highest proportion of artists in NSW, engaged in a diversity of production and exploration and independent new works
- State-government owned land hosting significant cultural institutions and infrastructure in Inner West servicing the creative economy, including the Writers Centre, and Sydney College of the arts in Rozelle, Canal Road Film Centre in Leichhardt, and the Big Red Box hosting Legs on the Wall in Lilyfield.

Inner West Council's key priorities therefore relate to protecting and nurturing our industrial lands and venues for cultural production and presentation in the face of increasing residential development and the rezoning of industrial lands. Within this context, the protection of the Carrington Road precinct is critical.

Inner West Council also seeks to differentiate between technology based creative industries/ office based creative work and the specialised needs of cultural production/ manufacturing. Council encourages the state government to consider its definition of creative industries and the way in which these are used, particularly for the purposes of planning and development.

2. Protect and enhance cultural spaces and music venues and make it easier for creatives to start new spaces and/ or present their work

The Inner West has a high density of Sydney's live music and cultural venues. These include:

- Bridge Hotel
- Big Red Box
- Enmore Theatre
- Factory Theatre
- Red Rattler
- Marrickville Bowling Club
- Petersham Bowling Club
- Portuguese Club
- Midnight Shift
- Newsagency
- Camelot Lounge/ Django Bar
- Gasoline Pony
- Bald Faced Stag
- Lewisham Hotel
- Italian Forum Cultural Centre

This is supplemented by a range of other pubs, clubs and restaurants that showcase music as part of their business offering, such as the Sly Fox and Vic on the Park.

Council also notes that a thriving locally based music and arts economy is not constrained to traditional performance venues, and sees an emerging and diverse activation of non-traditional venues such as shop-fronts and public domain pop-ups.

In August 2014 former Leichhardt Council in collaboration with the former Marrickville Council and the City tabled the final report and recommendations of the *Parramatta Road Live Music Reference Group*. The Report proposed collaboration between state and local government on research and amendments to legislation and regulations to achieve an environment facilitating live music and diverse cultural and performance activation of non-traditional venues. Examples of types of collaboration:

- Work on s149 Certificates to ensure appropriate notice is provided to prospective purchasers, in particular those buying in the vicinity of mixed use and late night trading areas
- Modifying building codes, LEP's and DCP's
- Guidance for creative start-ups and existing venues in ensuring that locations are fit for purpose
- Ensuring that requirements and standards are geared towards nature and circumstances of pop-up and other more transient land uses
- Consistency of compliance and enforcement action
- Improving loading arrangements
- Aligning operations between the organisations to ensure constancy of documentation and advice etc.

- Use of Council premises for rehearsal and performance¹

Inner West Council acknowledges the important work undertaken by the City of Sydney in developing the *Open and Creative City* discussion paper (2017). Following on from the City's extensive consultation and regulatory advances, during 2017 – 2018 Inner West Council will develop a range of reforms to support our local creative and cultural life and will work with the City to harmonise policies where possible and necessary, such as the King St/ Newtown area.

Inner West Council supports the City's exploration of the Agent of Change Principle and other noise attenuation investigations to protect local venues.

- Some of the Inner West's most long standing venues are currently under threat by rezoning and gentrification, the most critical of these being in the Victoria Road Precinct, which is to be rezoned from Industrial. Three key venues will be impacted by this rezoning: Factory Theatre; Red Rattler and Marrickville Bowling Club.

It is critical that measures to protect existing music and cultural life are fully considered in light of any rezoning or developments.

In addition, the NSW Government should work with local Councils to

- Minimize competing regulatory environments that affect venues (eg. POEO Act, local development consents) to assist with clarity for venues around noise and compliance.
- Enhance existing cultural infrastructure such as the Canal Road Film precinct and NSW Writers Centre managed by Create NSW which houses many new media/film companies, storage facilities for major companies as well as the NSW Writers Centre in Callan Park, and the Red Box complex (former Parachute Regiment Headquarters) - the most significant cultural infrastructure hosting diverse arts organisations in the Inner West.

3. Creating shared understanding.

Governments and research institutions throughout the country have variously addressed definitions and sought to scope the parameters of culture, and the creative industries, and their contribution to the wider economy.

Council encourages the state government to consider its definition of creative industries and the way in which this is used, particularly for the purposes of planning and development and believes there is a need to define the value of cultural production, and the cultural production/manufacturing interface, in Greater Sydney as distinct from Creative industries

Recommendations:

- Protect industrial lands that house cultural production spaces from rezoning
- Recognise and nurture irreplaceable creative hubs in the Inner West, such as Carrington Road
- NSW Government agencies (ie Department of Planning, Liquor and Gaming, Environment Protection Authority) should work with local government to assist with clarity for venues and to assist the Agent of Change principle, whereby operations of existing venues are protected in the context of rezoning and redevelopment
- State and local government collaborate on research and amendments to Legislation and Regulations etc.in regard to
 - o Work on defining offensive noise and its assessment
 - o Work on s149 Certificates to ensure appropriate notice is provided to prospective purchasers, in particular those buying in the vicinity of mixed use and late night trading areas

¹ <http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/2886/item3.04-aug2014-ord.pdf.aspx>

- Modifying building codes, LEP's and DCP's
- Guidance for creative start-ups and existing venues in ensuring that locations are fit for purpose
- Ensuring that requirements and standards are geared towards nature and circumstances of pop-up and other more transient land uses
- Council encourages the state government to consider its definition of creative industries and the way in which these are used, particularly for the purposes of planning and development
- Define the value of cultural production, and the cultural production/ manufacturing interface, in Greater Sydney as distinct from Creative industries
- Collaborate with local Councils to protect existing relevant cultural services in the Inner West as contributors to cultural industries in Greater Sydney as a whole
- Maintain the capacity of cultural infrastructure in the inner west located on state-owned land to continue making a significant contribution to the Music and Arts economy of NSW.

**Inner West Council
19 January 2018.**